

Miscellaneous.

THE ORDINANCE SURVEY OF SCOTLAND.—An officer of the Ordnance engineering corps has been at Kelso, according to a local paper, making preliminary observations previous to commencing the Government survey of that district. There is a desire expressed in various parts of Scotland, to have the survey laid down on the large instead of on the small scale, although the small scale was adopted after repeated complaints, on the part of the people of Scotland, of the slow progress of the survey, and in order that it might be hastened more rapidly towards completion.

HEXHAM ABBEY CHURCH.—A fund is being raised for the restoration of this church, and for the purchase and removal of houses blocking up the lady chapel, which is falling into ruin.

DEFECTIVE DRAINAGE OF LOWER HOLLOWAY.—A movement is in progress for sending a deputation to the new Commission of Metropolitan Sewers to urge the necessity of immediate operations to drain the neighbourhood, especially as for some years past there has been a sixpenny rate levied for that purpose.

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS.—Several windows of stained glass, designed and executed by Mr. William Holland, of Warwick, have been put up in St. Mary's Church, Sydmonton, Hants. The east window contains incidents relative to the life of Christ. In the side openings are subjects of the "Baptism" and "Last Supper," with "The Crucifixion" in the centre light; each under an appropriate canopy, with angels, &c. in recesses. The cross and pine, upon ruby and blue backgrounds, form the pedestals. Each opening is surrounded with elaborate borders composed of the vine and ivy. The openings in tracery contain the dove and Holy Trinity; also angels bearing scrolls, with inscriptions and shields, upon which are the instruments of the crucifixion. The arch of the window is illuminated with the following words: "If ye love me keep my commandments." Beneath the window, and immediately above the communion-table, upon a scroll, the words: "This do in remembrance of me," are inscribed in illuminated characters. On the south side of the chancel is an obituary window, in which is introduced the subject of "Christ blessing little Children," under a canopy. The windows on south side of nave are filled with ornamental patterns, in which are placed the emblems of the four Evangelists, in medallions, the back grounds interlaced with bands of colour, in various forms, with the vine and oak dispersed over the whole, and each being surrounded with a vine border. The windows in south side of nave are filled with the same description of glass, in which are placed angels bearing scrolls, on which are texts of Scripture; also in centre of one the monogram of St. Mary, with rose background, which is surrounded by a border composed of the monogram of St. Mary, crown, lilies, and fleur de lis, the whole being emblematical of the Virgin Mary. The west window contains the figure of the Virgin and Child, to whom the church is dedicated. They are placed under a canopy, surrounded by an elaborate border composed of the fleur de lis and rose. There are other smaller windows also of stained glass by same artist.—A Coventry paper states that the Right Hon. Edward Ellice, M.P. for that city, being gratified at the manner in which St. Michael's Church has been restored, has offered to bear the whole expense of filling the great east window with stained glass.—Another step in the improvement and beautification of Trinity Church, Cambridge, has just been made, by filling the large east window with stained glass. This object has been effected by subscription, promoted by the vicar, the Rev. C. Clayton, and materially aided by a contribution from himself. In design, the window is in the Decorated style, the heading containing the Trinity shield. We hear, says the *Cambridge Chronicle*, that it is the intention of the vicar to fill in another window with stained glass as a memorial to his late parents.

FRENCH EXPLORATIONS AT NINEVEH.—M. Place, consul of France at Mossul, has examined the whole of the palace of Khorsabad and its dependencies, and in so doing, it is said, has elucidated some doubtful points, and obtained proof that the Assyrians were not ignorant of any of the resources of architecture. He is also said to have discovered a gate 12 feet high, which appears to have been one of the entrances to the city, several constructions in marble, two rows of columns, apparently extending a considerable distance, the cellar of the palace, containing rows of wine-jars, at the bottom of which there is still a sort of deposit of a violet colour. M. Place has, moreover, discovered the storehouse of pottery. He has also caused excavations to be made in various hills on the left bank of the Tigris, within ten leagues of Khorsabad. In them he had found monuments, tombs, jewellery, and articles in gold and other metal, and stone. At Diggrin there is a monument supposed to be as large as that of Khorsabad. At Mattai and at Barrian M. Place has found bas-reliefs cut in solid rock: they consist of colossal figures and full-length portraits of the kings of Assyria. He has taken copies of his discoveries by the photographic process; and announces that Colonel Rawlinson has authorised him to make diggings near the places which the English are engaged in examining. These details were recently transmitted by M. Place to the French Minister of the Interior.

SCANDINAVIAN EXHIBITION.—A letter from Copenhagen, of the 29th ult. says, that "the palace for the exhibition of Scandinavian manufactures is now completed. The vast edifice, constructed according to the plans of Messrs. Hansen and Moeler, architects to the court, is of iron. The internal arrangements closely resemble those of the Crystal Palace of London. It covers nearly the whole of the grounds of the palace of Christiansburg, at Copenhagen; so that, in fact, it stands within the inclosure of the royal palace, and exactly faces the windows of the state apartments of the royal family. The opening of this first exhibition of Scandinavian arts and manufactures is fixed for the 1st of September next."

TRANSMISSION OF MOTIVE POWER.—M. Fontainebleau, of South-street, Finsbury, has patented a plan for the transmission of power in lieu of cog-wheels and pinions, straps, and bands. This is effected by means of an angularly grooved wheel, with another working therein of a wedge form; and by the grip to be obtained any description of machinery may be set in motion.

THE SAFETY OF BOW STEEPLE.—As I see you are on the subject of lightning conductors, could not you manage to draw the attention of the Corporation of the City to the state of Bow Church in that respect? There is at present nothing in the shape of a conductor to it, the iron spindle of the vane terminating about half-way down inside the obelisk, where the bottom of it is fixed in two cross iron bars. Of course, we may naturally conclude that the portion above the upper gallery will be blown to atoms (whenever it may happen to be struck), at least, while it is very probable that all above the great circular cloister round the base of the spire may share the same fate, considering that that drum is only 8½ in. thick of stone, which with the twelve circular detached columns, 1 ft. 8 in. above base, in the whole which supports the spire, at the same time it being out of the upright, and one of the columns being split, and only held together by metal rings. Surely the parish or the corporation cannot be so poor as not to be able to do this, even although they may not like to lay out the money for putting it in a proper state of repair, and save the glory of the city, next to St. Paul's, from going to ruin. The iron cramps are splitting the stone to pieces both in the upper part of the tower and in the spire, while the stone must have gone quite half an inch in some parts. It is interesting to see the wonderful skill with which everything has been seen and provided against excepting only the quality of the stone and iron employed.

J. S. I.

COKE BRICKS.—An invention has recently been patented by Mr. Wm. Piddington, of Chislehurst, Kent, for the adaptation of a preparation of coke, by which bricks, paving slabs, door and stair-steps, columns, cornices, capitals, tiles, pipes, blocks, railway sleepers, and other articles in request by builders for all the ordinary purposes of their trade, for which clay, brick, stone, or marble is now used, can be produced. On the specification, it is stated that an article similar in shape, size, and colour to the various kinds of bricks now in use, of tenfold durability as compared with the best manufacture supplied from the kilns, and but of one-third the weight, can be produced at a cost varying from one-third to one-sixth of the price of the present article. It is said to be impervious to damp, or any other atmospheric influence; and that by a peculiar process it is rendered indestructible by the agency of fire. We know nothing of it beyond the specification.

PROPOSED NEW DOCKS FOR LONDON.—An advertisement has appeared of a new dock company for the port of London, which has been long in contemplation, and is now incorporated by Act of Parliament. The site chosen is on the Plaistow Marshes, adjoining the North Woolwich Railway, where the area of water accommodation, consisting of a dock and tidal basin, will be upwards of 90 acres, together with a mile of wharfage-room, with 160,000 feet of fireproof warehouses. 400,000l. is the proposed share capital, authority being given by the Act to borrow a further sum of 133,000l.; and an offer has been received from Messrs. Peto, Betts, and Brassey, to purchase the land and construct the whole for 425,000l. These parties have likewise proposed to take a lease of the undertaking for 21 years, allowing the shareholders 5 per cent. on the outlay, and the half of all profits beyond 5 per cent. such proposal to remain open for acceptance until February 1, 1853.

SALES OF PROPERTY.—August 4, by Messrs. Chinnock and Galsworthy, at the Mart.—Reversion to 254l. Three per Cent. receivable at death of a lady aged 77—sold for 165l.: leasehold carcass of a corner private house, No. 1, Ledbury-road, built to contain fourteen rooms, term ninety-nine years, at a ground-rent of 10l. 10s.; annual value when complete, 90l.; will cost to finish, 300l.—640l.: a ditto, adjoining the preceding, with shop; annual value when complete, 60l.; ground-rent, 10l. 10s.; term, ninety-nine years; cost to finish, 200l.—240l.: freehold and copyhold estates at Walsham, in the county of Suffolk, near Bury St. Edmunds, containing mansion and 602 acres of land, annual rental 985l.—bought in at 24,000l.: freehold estates in the adjoining parishes, comprising 177 acres, annual value 199l.—5,400l.

CONTRACT COMPETITION.—Having watched with considerable and painful interest, for years, the system of contract competition, and witnessed numerous instances of the ruinous effect upon the circumstances of contractors, in the various departments of the building trade, by the eager acceptance of low tenders on the part of committees and other public, as well as private, individuals, I am led to say that if their professional man on such occasions were properly consulted by the committee, or other party, on whom the decision of acceptances or refusals of contracts rests, and he himself were a man of principle, so many cases of fraudulent description—imperfect work and materials—or in the absence of these, certain loss to the contracting parties, could not well occur. My feelings and judgment in the matter—even before I retired from the profession, seventeen years ago,—are very strong, and I greatly fear that not a little of the mischief arising from the eagerness for low tenders has its origin in the architect, not unfrequently tempting his clients, whether public bodies or private individuals, by too low estimates, and then finding himself in the dilemma of either confessing this fact, or, for the sake of saving his own reputation as a careful estimator, driven perforce to support the deciders in their acceptance of an unduly low offer for the work.

E. S. R.